

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

B.O.B. Trailers, Inc.

Idaho TechHelp

BOB Trailers, Inc. Becomes the Leader in Following

Client Profile:

BOB Trailers, Inc. was founded in San Luis Obispo, California as The Beast of Burden Company by Roger Malinowski, a bicycle industry maven, and Philip Novotny, an airline mechanic and inventor of the YAK, a versatile, lightweight, single-track bike trailer. In 2006, attracted by a favorable business climate and a lifestyle conducive to its philosophy, BOB moved its corporate offices to Boise, Idaho. Today, BOB Trailers, Inc. is focused on producing high quality baby jogging strollers and bicycle trailers. The company employs 25 people.

Situation:

BOB looked to TechHelp, a NIST MEP network affiliate, and resources at the New Product Development Lab (NPDL) and CNC Mill at Boise State to help augment its engineering expertise and speed new products to market.

Solution:

TechHelp used the stereo lithography apparatus (SLA) and CNC Mill at Boise State to build a variety of prototype parts for BOB. These parts allow the company to test functionality of new plastic part designs prior to investing in expensive plastic mold tooling. BOB also worked with TechHelp on a research project that correlated strength parameters of SLA materials to nylon. This allows BOB to use inexpensive SLA prototype parts in strength testing and to predict more accurately the strength of the final nylon plastic part. Such testing allows the company to make important design changes before investing in expensive production tooling. TechHelp has also provided product design that led to successful final designs and drawings. This work gives TechHelp's student engineers at Boise State valuable experience in the product development process. Two graduates of TechHelp and the Boise State College of Engineering now work full time at BOB Trailers, Inc.

Results:

- * Retained sales of \$10,000
- * Realized \$347,600 in cost savings.
- * Improved workforce practices by \$1,000.
- * Invested \$332,000 in product development.
- * Retained 2 jobs.

Testimonial:

"TechHelp has been a valuable asset to our business model. The organization has helped BOB Trailers improve in many ways and has certainly provided stimulus to the economy by helping us shorten our product development cycle and speed new products to market."

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Mike Baughnam, Technical Director